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India put on priority watch list for IP rights

The US on Tuesday once again placed India on its 'priority watch list', stating that New Delhi remains one of the world's most challenging major economies for protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights. The report has listed eight countries in its 'priority watch list' including China, Indonesia, Russia, Argentina and Venezuela

Registration fee for commercial vehicles to go up

AKNISREE KARTHIK @ Bengaluru

REGISTRATION fee for commercial vehicles priced within Rs 10 lakh and for those used in the construction sector will go up from May 1.

The state government is implementing the Karnataka Motor Vehicle Taxation (Amendment) Act on May 1, despite opposition from commercial vehicle operators. The lifetime tax for cabs that cost less than Rs 10 lakh will be 5% of the cost of the vehicle. Till now, lifetime taxes were not imposed on commercial vehicles (taxis) that cost less than Rs 10 lakh at one go, but were instead collected quarterly at the rate of Rs 100 per seat for a four-seater vehicle.

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Mob lynches man in M'luru

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

A man from Kerala was allegedly lynched by a mob of 30 men during a cricket match near Bhatra Kallurti temple at Kudupu in Mangaluru on Sunday.

The victim has been identified as Ashraf (40), a resident of Pulpalli village in Sultan Bathery, Wayanad.

Of the 30 accused, 15 have been arrested, the police said in a statement.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and military chiefs, at a meeting in Delhi on Tuesday | PTI

FULL FREEDOM TO FORCES

Modi gives them operational freedom to decide the mode, targets and timing of action against terror

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday gave the security forces full operational freedom to to decide the mode, targets and timing of their decisive action against the terror outfits responsible for the Pahalgam brutality against tourists and also smash their ecosystem.

The directive came at a marathon meeting at his residence with defence minister Rajnath Singh, the chiefs of the armed forces and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. Modi expressed complete confidence in the professional abilities of the armed forces. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan was part of the meeting.

Sources said the PM, after listening to inputs from the top officers, underscored the national resolve to deal a crushing blow to terrorism.

Parallelly, Union home secretary Govind Mohan held a high-level meeting with chiefs of Central Armed Police Forces and two other central security agencies. Among those who attended the meeting were the Directors General of Border Security Force Daljit Singh Chaudhary, National Security Guard Brighu Srinivasan and Assam Rifles Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera, sources said, adding that Additional Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal Anupama Nilekar Chandra was present.

After the meeting with the defence leadership, Modi also met with Union home minister Amit Shah.

By earlier announcing that the security forces would go the ends of the earth to bring the perpetrators of the Pahalgam massacre to justice, adding that the terrorists would be subjected to punishment beyond their imagination, the PM set the bar very high for kinetic action.

Sources suggest that the final contours of the response may be decided during the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting, scheduled for Wednesday following a meeting of the Union Cabinet. The buzz is the government is preparing for a multi-pronged offensive against terror — diplomatically and, if required, militarily — including possible strikes on terror camps in the days ahead.

Bhagwat comes calling

After a day of marathon meetings, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a rare guest at home — RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. Coming as the meeting did after Modi chaired two meetings on the response to the Pahalgam carnage, it sparked speculation about the RSS's stance on the possible kinetic action

Using Pegasus for security not wrong, says SC

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE government possessing Pegasus spyware for security purposes is not wrong, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday. However, allegations of it being used against private individuals can be looked at, it added.

"What's wrong if a country is using spyware? To have spyware is not wrong... against whom you are using it is the question. You can't sacrifice the security of the nation," a bench of justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh said.

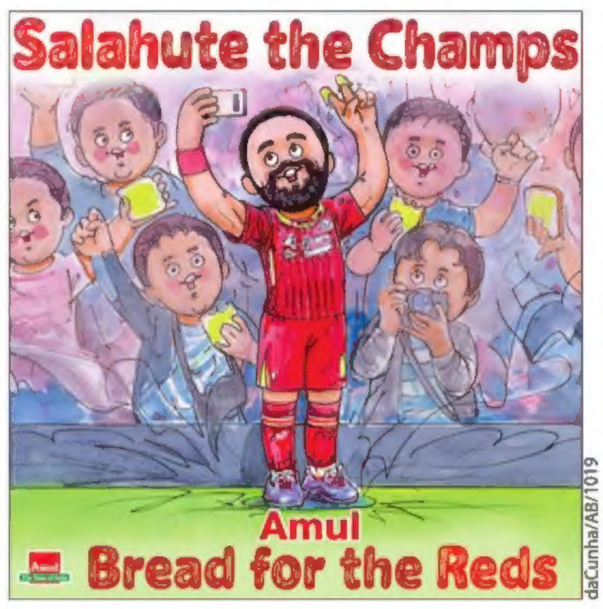
The bench said that a technical committee's report on the issue can't be made public in view of security. However, affected individuals can be informed, it added.

SC's remarks came while hearing a batch of pleas seeking a detailed probe into allegations against the government over the use of Israeli software Pegasus to snoop on activists, journalists, and others. The petitioners said surveillance using military-grade spyware is a violation of privacy.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said, "Terrorists can't claim privacy rights."

The bench said civil individuals, who have the right to privacy, will be protected under the Constitution.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for a petitioner, said he wanted to place on record a judgment of a US court that said India was among the affected countries. The bench allowed this and posted the matter to July 30.



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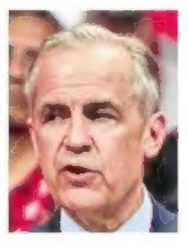
PM Modi congratulates Carney, seeks reset in ties

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday congratulated Canadian prime minister Mark Carney on his Liberal Party's stunning victory in the federal elections, expressing hope for a reset in India-Canada relations after years of strain under former PM Justin Trudeau's leadership.



Notably, Khalistan sympathiser Jagmeet Singh failed to retain his seat and resigned as leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) after the party's disastrous showing with seat count plummeting from 24 to 7.

Congratulating Carney and the Liberal Party, Modi said: "I look forward to working with you to strengthen our partnership and unlock greater opportunities for our people. India and Canada are bound by shared democratic values, a steadfast commitment to the rule of law, and vibrant people-to-people ties."

Modi's message indicates a hopeful turn in India-Canada relations, which have faced multiple diplomatic flashpoints under ex-PM Trudeau's watch.

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